

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-8, 10, 12, 15-18 and 21-24 are pending in the present application. All the claims have been rejected except for claim 6 which has been objected to. The applicant has now added claims 25-28. No extra fees are due as the application now includes a total of twenty-two claims with three independent claims, and the applicant has paid for twenty-three total claims.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 15-18 and 21-24 as being obvious over Palmaz '261 in view of Frantzen et al. (5,843,164). According to the Examiner, Palmaz discloses all of the limitation of the claims except for the plurality of spokes that extend rearward from an interior chamber and toward an inner wall of a blood vessel, and Frantzen et al. disclose a stent with a plurality of spokes in order to better secure an implant to a blood vessel wall.

The applicant has amended the claims to define clearly over Palmaz and Frantzen et al. In particular, all of the independent claims now require that the spokes extend from said interior chamber out said rear opening and radially outward toward the inner wall of the blood vessel. To the extent that Palmaz provides a plug with a rear opening, clearly, any spokes which would extend from Palmaz would not extend through the rear opening.

It is also noted that dependent claims 15 and 21 require that the spokes extend radially outward at positions longitudinally offset from the rear end of the plug surface.

Clearly, such an arrangement is neither shown nor suggested by either Palmaz or Frantzen et al.

Finally, it is noted that new claims 25-28 present limitations not found in either Palmaz or Frantzen et al. Claim 25 requires a substantially frusto-conical, flexible, non-expanding element having an outer wall with a closed nose, an interior chamber, and a rear opening. Clearly, the Palmaz and Frantzen et al. are expanding stents which do not meet such a limitation. Claim 26 requires a coupling element for the plug which is integral with the flexible metal spokes and such a coupling element is not found in the cited art. Claim 27 requires that the coupling element which is integral with the metal spokes define a pilot hole. To the extent that Palmaz has a pilot hole, clearly the pilot hole is not part of the metal spoke element.

In light of all of the above, it is submitted that the claims are in order for allowance, and prompt allowance is earnestly requested. Should any issues remain outstanding, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney of record so that the case may proceed expeditiously to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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